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19 December 1969

SUBJECT: Contingent Employment of Agency U-2's

1. The precise circumstances in which it would be useful or even critical for the US government to have available a deniable or clandestine and fast reacting photo reconnaissance vehicle capable of pin-point targeting and follow up missions cannot be foretold with complete confidence and accuracy. Nonetheless, given the still highly disturbed state of affairs [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] it seems certain that contingencies will develop where the facts are obscure and the need for a US decision urgent. In some such cases, at least, U-2 photography might prove to be the best and most readily available "hard evidence" available.

2. We list below some of the contingencies which can now be envisaged in which employment of [REDACTED] U-2's might be useful. But we would stress that this list is not intended to be exhaustive; events of the new few years could bring radical changes in certain areas and produce situations not now foreseeable.

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GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

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3. The Far East. Most of possible requirements for U-2 coverage in this region arise from the continuing possibility of Chinese Communist troop and logistical buildups in areas adjacent to non-Communist territory: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Unusual CPR deployment might also occur along China's borders with North Korea or North Vietnam, raising the possibility of subsequent movement through the territory of these Communist neighbors.

4. Scenarios leading to a requirement for high resolution photography at low political risk would probably commence with receipt of other intelligence -- [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] diplomatic rumors, and perhaps satellite photography as well. As the volume of reporting swelled, so would high-level speculation on the scope and meaning of the reported buildup. This has happened often enough in the past, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] In time, pressure would grow within the intelligence community for procurement of

\* [REDACTED]

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more accurate information to help confirm or refute the speculation. The most reliable evidence, in the judgment of many Asian analysts, could be provided by good aerial photography of the border zones.

5. While there is presently little or no political problem in surveillance of target areas in Indochina, a formalized settlement of the wars in Laos and Vietnam might by its terms involve cessation of US overhead reconnaissance activities.

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